

imprints

The Newsletter of Literacy BC

Moving Forward: A Pan-Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Strategy

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) has done a tremendous job at facilitating national discussions and putting forth recommendations regarding the need for a Pan-Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Strategy. We at Literacy BC have been doing everything we can to actively support MCL in this essential initiative.

Please refer to and read the current issue of **literacy.ca** which clearly outlines MCL's progress to date. The article on page 5, **Influencing Change: Your Voice Matters** by Chris Dendys is a must read. We all have a voice and role in moving this agenda forward and we urge you to take action locally!

In October 2002 delegates from BC participated in the annual **Literacy Action Day** in Ottawa. They included Audrey Thomas, Ellen Szita and Vicki Austad. Also in October, Literacy BC's Executive Director, Linda Mitchell participated in a **Best Practices Roundtable**, where representatives

from across the country developed recommendations for the Canadian government regarding literacy. Twelve recommendations were presented to the Minister of HRDC, Honourable Jane Stewart.

The impact of these recommendations was felt

just one month later, at the National Summit on Innovation and Learning, when a Pan-Canadian Literacy and Essential Skills Strategy was identified as a key government priority.

On March 20, at the request of the Human Resources Development Canada's Standing Committee studying literacy, Jean Rasmussen, Director of Community and Family Development & Training, represented Literacy BC before the Committee at a presentation in Ottawa. Jean encouraged the committee to:

- ✓ Develop a national agreement on literacy and essential skills
- ✓ Increase capacity for literacy and learning by increasing resources to provincial and national literacy organizations
- ✓ Invest in "Learning Communities" which are community based and support social and economic development and prosperity
- ✓ Invest in our people and in our communities in the way they need and want us to - with the cornerstone of this investment being literacy and learning

To keep you informed of the progress of this exciting agenda for change, the latest issue of MCL's **literacy.ca** is included as an insert with our newsletter. Here you will find a comprehensive summary of the work to date and the next steps.

IN THIS ISSUE:

...2002-03 Literacy BC Board
...The New School @ Surrey
...First Steps Project
...literacy.ca and Learners in Action

Canada Post Call for Nominations

Individuals, practitioners and organizations are invited to submit their nominations now for the **2003 Canada Post Literacy Awards**. These are the only national awards dedicated to recognizing grass roots literacy initiatives and celebrating the achievements of learners and the people who help them along the way. There are four categories: Individual Achievement, Educator, Community Leadership and Business Achievement.

- **Individual Achievement** celebrates the achievements of learners who successfully overcame social or economic



barriers by improving their literacy skills.

- **Educator**

honours educators, tutors, and advocates who have demonstrated a commitment to the cause of literacy.

- **Community Leadership**

recognizes and honours non-profit, volunteer and labour organizations that have demonstrated long-term achievement, innovation, leadership and organizational excellence in furthering the cause of literacy.

- **Business Leadership**

recognizes a single business organization that has demonstrated its commitment to literacy by establishing or supporting literacy programs in the workplace or community.

To obtain a complete nominations package, contact Literacy BC or visit the **Literacy Award Web site** at www.canadapost.ca/literacyawards.

**The deadline is
Friday, May 30, 2003.**

The names of finalists will be announced in July; winners will be notified in August.

The Co-operators 2003 Provincial Learner Achievement Award

The search for a well deserving individual is on again as **The Co-operators**, a national insurance company, proudly sponsors the **2003 Provincial Learner Achievement Award**. This award recognizes the outstanding achievements of an adult learner in BC.

The winner will be chosen by a committee of adult learners. The \$200 award will be presented at the 2003 Literacy BC Annual General Meeting in October. The winner will also be announced at the PGI golf tournament in July.

To qualify for **The Co-operators Learner Achievement Award** the student must:

- be an adult and planning to continue in an ABE program.
- have attended some type of program, for at least six months and preferably one year, and have excellent attendance
- have shown substantial and/or exceptional progress

- have a recommendation from a teacher or a tutor
- fill out an application- teachers or tutors can help with this task.

**The deadline for applications is
May 15, 2003**

For application forms, call Literacy BC
(toll free) at 1-800-663-1293
or download them from our website at
www.literacy.bc.ca.

**the
co-operators**
A Better Place For You™

About the First Steps Research

Prospect Point Consulting Inc. is beginning research on behalf of the "First Steps" Steering Committee in April, 2003

The research will:

- Describe and evaluate existing systems.
- Determine whether the best way to create a national system would be to build upon what already exists, modify what exists, or create something new.
- Develop a complete understanding of the technical issues, the costs of building and running a national system, and the benefits of a national system.
- Anticipate all the ways in which a national system will affect current and potential stakeholders within the literacy community.

The research process will include:

- Interviews and focus groups with members of the Canadian literacy community.
- A web-based survey.

We will keep you posted on the progress of the research by distributing another information sheet in May. For further information, contact any of the Steering Committee members or:

Sandy Middleton
Project Manager
c/o Literacy BC
Phone: 604-684-0624
Fax: 604-684-8520
Email: smiddleton@literacy.bc.ca

Benefits of Electronic Conferencing

Electronic conferencing provides creative, powerful and accessible ways to:

- Collaborate and participate in new forums for discussion, learning, critical reflection, professional development and training.
- Share ideas and build knowledge about practice and research.
- Build relationships, community, and networks.
- Reduce isolation, duplication, and redundancy.
- Distribute resources and information.
- Plan and facilitate group work.

We Want to Hear from You

We encourage you to complete our web-based survey by April 30, 2003. You will find the survey at:

www.nald.ca/firststeps/

The First Steps Steering Committee

Centre AlphaPlus Centre
Linda Monteith, Executive Director
lmonteith@alphaplus.ca
1-800-788-1120

eLit.ca
Marnie Schaetti, Executive Leadership Team
Literacy Alberta
marnie_schaetti@eLit.ca
403-297-4969

The Hub
Linda Mitchell, Executive Director
Literacy BC
lmitchell@literacy.bc.ca
604-684-0624
1-800-663-1293 (toll-free in BC)

The National Adult Literacy Database
Charles Ramsey, Executive Director
ramseyc@nald.ca
1-800-720-6253

First Steps

April, 2003

Issue #1

Towards a National Literacy Electronic Network and Conferencing System

"An electronic infrastructure does for the literacy community what the railway did for this nation. It links scattered communities and maximizes opportunities to share resources and ideas."

National Literacy Secretariat, 1997
Budget 1997: Implications for Literacy in Canada
Ottawa, ON: National Literacy Secretariat

The "First Steps" project is determining the feasibility and affordability of creating a national literacy electronic conferencing system.

Funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada, "First Steps" is undertaking a process of research, consultation with the field, and strategic planning that will evaluate different options and recommend a possible solution.

This process will build on a history of collaboration and lessons learned and on existing knowledge, experience and research.

A report will be produced in June 2003 for distribution and discussion within the Canadian literacy community.

In the meantime, check us out on the internet at www.nald.ca/firststeps/.

First Steps Partners

Centre AlphaPlus Centre

AlphaPlus operates AlphaCom, a bilingual electronic discussion system for the literacy community in Ontario.
www.alphaplus.ca



eLit.ca

A cooperative among the Alberta Association for Adult Literacy, the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, and Literacy Partners of Manitoba, eLit.ca offers electronic conferencing for the literacy community in the prairie provinces.
www.elit.ca

eLit.ca

The Hub

A partnership between Literacy BC and Capilano College, The Hub offers electronic conferencing for the BC literacy community.
www.literacy.bc.ca
[Electronic Conferencing Network]

The HUB

The National Adult Literacy Database

NALD provides information and resources, including listserves, to the Canadian literacy community in both official languages.
www.nald.ca



The Northwest Territories Literacy Council / North of 60

The NWT Literacy Council uses the Government of the NWT North of 60 electronic conferencing system to provide services to the NWT literacy community.
www.nwt.literacy.ca/N60/n60_1.htm#find



The New School @ Surrey

National Youth Literacy Demonstration Project

New School Addresses Old Problem

Literacy BC and the Surrey School District are working together to develop a new and effective educational alternative for high school students who have great difficulty reading and writing. The research and development project is co-funded by the National Literacy Secretariat and the Crime Prevention Centre. It is intended to not only establish an alternative program in Surrey but to foster improved literacy services for youth in British Columbia and throughout Canada.

Youth Literacy: A National Concern

Approximately twenty-five percent of eighth-grade students in British Columbia do not obtain their Dogwood Certificate within the following six years. Many fail to graduate at all. This is not just a problem in BC. As stated by the Minister of Human Resources Development in *Knowledge Matters, Skills and Learning for Canadians*, "A significant minority of Canadian children are not developing the skills and ability to learn that will help them live and work to their full potential."

A common reason for the academic difficulties that adolescents encounter is that many children, for a variety of reasons, do not learn to read by the time they complete the third grade. This is the demarcation point where their education shifts from "learning to read," to "reading to learn." Any child whose reading skills are significantly lagging at that time faces an uphill challenge.

Lack of adequate literacy skills often inhibits academic progress across the board since students must acquire most knowledge through textbooks. This is true not just for English, but science, social studies, and math as well. Once students enter the higher grades, little is offered in terms of scaffolding, hands-on learning, individualized assistance, or technology-mediated instruction. As a result, the strengths of these students – the ability to learn in ways that are not dependent on print – do not come into play. Often, competence and confidence decrease in equal measure, leading to re-

duced self-esteem, increased frustration, and anger. Demoralized and disengaged, these students tend to tune out, act out, or drop out.

Few resources are available for students who are not diagnosed as having learning disabilities. Alternative programs, designed for students who learn independently through the use of print modules, do not work for these students, since they require the very reading skills they lack. Without assistance that speaks directly to their needs and capabilities, the future for these students is far from bright.

"For young people, many routes to exclusion still exist in Canadian society. Despite declines in the high school drop-out rate, a full 20 percent of young people fail to graduate. In the past, those with low levels of education could find employment, but those who now fail to complete high school face the very real prospect of being unemployed or finding poor paying jobs and insecure work. They are therefore more likely to live in poverty, without the economic independence considered key to achieving full citizenship. This problem particularly affects Aboriginal youth and those from disadvantaged families, perpetuating inequality across generations."

Caroline Beauvais, Lindsey McKay and Adam Seddon, "A Literature Review on Youth and Citizenship," (Ottawa: Canadian Policy Research Network Discussion Paper CPRN-02, 2001).

Building an Effective High School Literacy Education Model

More than Just a Classroom

Beginning with the 2001/02 school year, Surrey School District began operating a demonstration classroom to address the multiple challenges of youth who have either dropped out of school or were identified as being at risk of doing so. Built after the model of a "lab school" – a program that brings together research and teaching – the school offers two sessions daily for approximately twenty students each. The class reflects "promising practices" identified by researchers and other schools and literacy programs as being effective in helping youth develop critical literacy skills.

The New School is an active research site with a full-time onsite researcher and two other researchers who develop curriculum materials and work with staff to assess effective approaches to instruction and learning. Curriculum materials will be posted to the Web and be available to literacy providers throughout Canada.



New School students during silent reading period

The project and its students faced significant challenges. Although the students are nominally enrolled in the tenth grade, their average reading level on entering the program was below grade six. Having been absent from school – in mind, if not in body – for a number of years, most lacked the background knowledge required to understand basic 10th grade subjects. They had few, if any, study skills. And a number of young people demonstrated disruptive behaviour that not only prevented them from learning, but also negatively affected learning for all students in the class.

Focus on Engaged Learning

The educational program builds on the concepts of multiple intelligences and engaged learning. Each individual has multiple ways of learning and interacting with the world. Traditional education emphasizes learning through listening, reading and rote memorization. Many students do not learn easily in this manner. They are stronger in their artistic or physical skills, or perhaps in their ability to understand themselves or others. The demonstration program offers multiple methods for engaging course content, with a strong emphasis on visual content and the completion of projects that bridge or reinforce subject matter.

The program combines group lectures, small group discussions, pair work, and individual tutoring to assist students to understand subject matter and improve their basic skills. It also emphasizes the use of technology, arts activities, and hands-on experience as ways to expand learning experiences. There is a computer connected to the Internet for each student to facilitate inquiry, exploration, and completing task assignments. Students use digital still and video cameras to create images used in projects, and one day each week is spent in an art experience that focuses on themes that bridge other course content.

Assisting the Whole Person

Young people face many challenges that inhibit their ability to learn and succeed. Problems related to low-income, social dysfunction, or psychological stress are common. The program employs a full-time counsellor who assists the students and their families to obtain needed social services and cope with emotional stress. Although students have yet to complete the first school year, preliminary results are highly promising. Student attendance is on par with or superior to regular classes and students, on average, have raised their reading scores by over two grades.

The New School @ Surrey
Lee Weinstein, Principal
9260 140th Street
Surrey, BC V3V5Z4
604-584-5424

Canada Post Corporation: Leaders in Family Literacy

In December 2002, Canada Post generously donated \$2000 to support Literacy BC's Family Literacy initiatives. Thanks to Peter Wypkema, Bob Taylor and the staff of Canada Post for this wonderful contribution.

(L-R) Peter Wypkema, Director of Communications, Canada Post; Linda Mitchell, Executive Director, Literacy BC; Robert Taylor, Manager of Communications, Canada Post



2003 Summer
Literacy Institute
July 7 - 18, 2003

**Bridging Cultures
Strengthening Communities**



For all details and downloadable registration form, visit our website at www.literacy.bc.ca

Call for Action – First Steps Research Project

We Need Your Input.

Complete our web-based survey at www.nald.ca/firststeps/

In Memoriam Paul Gallagher

Paul Gallagher, Past President of Literacy BC, passed away on Thursday, March 27, 2003 in North Vancouver after a short illness, surrounded by his family.

Paul served as President of Literacy BC from 1997-2000, and Past President during 2001. He was a tireless champion of literacy and lifelong learning, and his list of accomplishments as an educator, administrator, and author is long.

Paul made a tremendous and lasting contribution to adult education and literacy in B.C. and across the country. He served as President of both Capilano College and Vancouver Community College and operated Gallagher and Associates, providing brokered educational consulting and training services to the public and private sector. He also served on numerous national and provincial policy advisory groups.

Paul was a dear friend and colleague who touched all of us at Literacy BC and many others with his humanity, humour, mentorship, leadership and vision. He will be deeply missed.



- Supporting Learners
- Providing Consultation, Referral, and Resources
- Raising Public Awareness
- Coordinating Regional Literacy Networks
- Providing Training and Professional Development
- Influencing Public Policy
- Building Partnerships

Donor Appreciation

Donations play a key role in helping Literacy BC to achieve its mission of promoting literacy across the province, supporting learners and presenting a united voice on literacy issues.

Literacy BC sincerely thanks the following individuals and organizations who have made donations to our organization since April 1, 2002.

\$1000 AND ABOVE

ABC CANADA
Breen Egan
Canada Post
The Executive Hotel - Downtown Vancouver
Deborah Laing McPhedran
International Association of Business Communicators - BC
Manulife Financial
The Molson Donations Fund
The Stewart Fund

UP TO \$1000

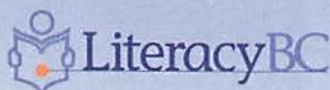
Bev Alexander • Judi Angel • June Arnett • Barbara Ash • Doreen Bellamy • Bea Berger • Dr. C. Matthew Blackwood • Georgina Brunette • Carla Bullinger • Lilian Burrows • Wayne Cunningham • Tracy Defoe • George Ditchburn • Paul Gallagher • Joyce Gram • John Grieve • David Griffiths • Hewitt & Associates Employees • Jean Hudson • The HYDRECS Fund • Diane Kirby • Raymond Lam • Diane Lepawsky • Leslie Lindsay • Colleen MacMillan • Barbara McBride • Dr. Barry McBride • Eileen McKinnon • Oracle Corporation • Peter Podovnikoff • Mark Rutledge • Rob Sanders • Joan Savoie • Anitra Singh • Audrey Thomas • UBC Employees • United Way of the Fraser Valley • Jacqueline Webster

Special thanks to the staff at O P Publishing for donating the generous proceeds from their Christmas fundraiser to Literacy BC!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

The Executive Hotels and Resorts - Champions of Literacy Since 1995

The Executive Hotels and Resorts has been a great supporter of Literacy BC since 1995. In the past five years alone, their in-kind contributions to Literacy BC have totaled more than \$45,000. This considerable support is extremely valuable to our organization as it allows us to dedicate even more of our resources towards directly supporting and promoting literacy activities in BC. Special thanks to Owner, Farida Sayani, Director of Sales, Sandy Quon and General Manager, Lee McIntyre for their generous support and commitment.



601-510 West Hastings Street
Vancouver BC V6B 1L8
Telephone: 604-684-0624
Toll free in BC: 1-800-663-1293
Fax: 604-684-8520

e-mail: info@literacy.bc.ca
www.literacy.bc.ca

We are supported by the B.C. Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development Canada; memberships and donations. Donations to Literacy BC are tax deductible.
Federal Charities Number: 12846-0334-RR0001

